

Senate Resolution 758

By: Senators Fort of the 39th, Brown of the 26th, Tarver of the 22nd, Ramsey, Sr. of the 43rd, Reed of the 35th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring the life and memory of Mr. John Hope Franklin; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia and this country mourns the loss of one of this nation's
3 finest educators, historians, and advocates, Mr. John Hope Franklin, who helped reshape
4 America's racial identity and profoundly influenced thinking about slavery, reconstruction,
5 and racial barriers; and

6 WHEREAS, born on January 2, 1915, in Rentiesville, Oklahoma, the beloved son of a
7 lawyer, Buck Colbert Franklin, and a teacher, Molly Parker Franklin, John Hope was named
8 after the president of Atlanta University; and

9 WHEREAS, at the age of 11, Mr. Franklin attended a speaking engagement held by the great
10 civil rights leader, W.E.B. Du Bois, a man who would inspire young Franklin to greatness
11 and whom he would later befriend; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Franklin earned a bachelor's degree from Fisk University and a master's and
13 doctoral degree from Harvard University, before going on to become an acclaimed and world
14 renowned author and historian, work which would earn him over 100 honorary degrees; and

15 WHEREAS, his 1947 book, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*,
16 considered one of the definitive historical surveys of the American black experience, has sold
17 over three million copies and been translated into many languages; and during his lifetime,
18 Mr. Franklin would author and edit over 20 books and numerous articles that would inspire
19 and inform the world; and

20 WHEREAS, responsible for breaking down racial barriers on many levels, Mr. Franklin's
21 research was instrumental in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, he was a
22 participant in the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,

23 and he served as the head of President Clinton's Advisory Board to the President's Initiative
24 on Race; and

25 WHEREAS, Mr. Franklin began his teaching career in 1936 at Fisk University and went on
26 to teach at St. Augustine's College, North Carolina College, Howard University, Brooklyn
27 College, the University of Chicago, Cambridge University, Harvard University, Cornell
28 University, and many other institutions; and

29 WHEREAS, although he taught around the world in such locations as Zimbabwe, China, and
30 Australia, he had a special place in his heart for Duke University, where he served as the
31 James B. Duke professor emeritus of history and was honored with the establishment of the
32 John Hope Franklin Research Center; and

33 WHEREAS, a groundbreaking historian, Mr. Franklin served as the first African American
34 president of the American Historical Association and was the first black professor to serve
35 as department chair at Brooklyn University, to hold an endowed chair at Duke University,
36 to serve as chairman of the University of Chicago's history department, and to present a paper
37 at the segregated Southern Historical Association; and

38 WHEREAS, throughout this brilliant man's amazing career he was honored with numerous
39 awards and accolades, including the nation's highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom,
40 and the John W. Kluge Prize for the Study of Humanities; and

41 WHEREAS, for nearly 60 years, he was united in love and marriage to his adoring and
42 devoted wife, Aurelia, and he was blessed with a remarkable and accomplished son, John
43 Whittington; and

44 WHEREAS, one of the most important historians of this century, Mr. Franklin's legacy and
45 influence will live on for generations to come, and he will long be remembered as an
46 educator, a historian, and a pioneer.

47 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
48 hereby join in honoring the life and memory of Mr. John Hope Franklin and recognizing his
49 incredible scholarship and genius.

50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
51 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the family of Mr. John Hope Franklin.